

TS No. 188407
5 April 1963

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Changes in Soviet Military Strength East of the Urals

1. During the past year the Soviets have continued their USSR-wide program of improving the quality of their military equipment. There have been few quantitative changes, however, and we do not feel that the area east of the Urals is being given significantly different emphasis than other areas.
2. The number of major ground forces units in the area remains the same as last year--29 divisions--with the major concentrations being opposite the Chinese and Mongolian borders where sizable groupings have existed since World War II. Despite the Sino-Soviet split, however, we have no evidence of the movement of additional Soviet troops toward the border. We believe it likely that during the past year the Soviet ground forces in this area, as elsewhere, have continued to build up their guided missile and nuclear weapons capability.
3. We have noted no significant change in the number of medium bombers based in Soviet Asia. The number continues to be modest; by far the greatest portion of the Soviet Long Range Air Force is stationed in the European USSR. There is reason to believe that Soviet Far East-based bomber units are giving more emphasis than in the past to the development of tactics to counter the threat from US carrier forces. This is also true of units based in the western USSR.
4. Soviet air defense forces continue to receive more up-to-date aircraft, associated ground radars and surface-to-air missiles. The growth of the Soviet early-warning radar network has now reached the point where almost the entire periphery of the USSR is covered by the latest model long range radars, including some areas opposite Communist China and Mongolia.

3. Last summer, as in most of the past 10 years, the Soviets transferred a number of new naval vessels from Europe via the Northern Sea Route to the Far East. These transfers allow the Pacific Ocean Fleet to be built up at a greater rate than can be done by the work of the Far East shipyards alone. The convoy in 1962 included eight submarines, all conventionally powered, and one new destroyer. Two of the submarines were modified to carry guided missiles. The addition of these submarines, plus the construction in Far East yards during 1962 of one conventionally-powered ballistic missile submarine and two nuclear powered cruise missile submarines brings to 95 the number of submarines now in the Pacific Ocean Fleet. This increase parallels the growth of submarine forces in the Northern Fleet based in the Barents Sea. These are the only two fleet areas from which the Soviet Navy has ready access to the open seas.

